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ABSTRACT

A British study verified whether the educational participation of Ford Motor Company's manual workers significantly increased following introduction of the Employee Development and Assistance Program (EDAP) and identified the features that contributed to its success. Over the past 15 years, studies of working class adults' educational participation in Britain identified demographic characteristics and factors clearly related to participation levels. EDAP offered assistance to every employee who wished to undertake some form of personal development, including educational activities and activities to promote a healthy lifestyle. Main functions directly concerned with employees' educational activities were as follows: information, publicity, administration, quality assurance, liaison with course providers, guidance and support, and organizing inplant activities. EDAP features that influenced employee participation included the following: learner's self-evaluation, attitudes to education, goals and expectations, and opportunities and barriers. Analysis of records and participant interviews indicated the following: 42 percent of manual workers participated in EDAP over 3 years, a participation rate 2-3 times higher than for the comparable section of the population; more than half were participating in formal learning for the first time since school; and the 3 most powerful factors in their decision to participate, from most to least, were availability of EDAP financial support, EDAP's help in overcoming practical difficulties and disincentives, and provision and support to accommodate shift workers. (Contains 30 references.) (YLB)

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WORKING PEOPLE AND LIFELONG LEARNING

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A study of the impact of an Employee Development Scheme

Andy Beattie

NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

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EDAF

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Author's note

This study originated as a research project carried out for an MA programme in the School of Post-Compulsory Education and Training at the University of Greenwich. My thanks go to Anne Griffin, my project supervisor, for helping me to clarify my thinking.

My thanks, too, to the EDAP Committee in the Assembly Plant at Ford Dagenham, for their support; to colleagues and others who helped me with my task; and especially to the employees who gave up a precious lunchbreak in order to be interviewed.

Note on terminology

'Participants' and 'participation' are terms used throughout the literature to refer to adults in general and their involvement in structured learning. They are used in the same way in this report. The same terms are also in regular use to refer to Ford employees who make use of the EDAP scheme. For the purposes of this study, an 'EDAP participant' is necessarily a 'participant' in the general sense also. Where the distinction is important, or not clear, the terms 'EDAP participants' and 'EDAP participation' are used in full.

The term 'adult education' is used throughout in its broadest sense ie, all educational provision open to adults, including further and higher education.

Contents

INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER 1	***Educational participation among working-class adults***	3
	How many participate?	
CHAPTER 2	***Factors affecting participation***	5
	Motivational theories	
	Situational theories	
	Composite/ decision-model theories	
	Barriers and deterrents	
CHAPTER 3	***Employee Development and Ford EDAP***	12
	What is Employee Development?	
	Ford EDAP	
	How the Ford EDAP scheme works	
CHAPTER 4	***EDAP's role in stimulating participation***	17
	Learner's self-evaluation	
	Attitudes to education	
	Goals and expectations	
	Opportunities and barriers	
CHAPTER 5	***The impact of EDAP: participation rates***	22
	Analysis of EDAP records	
	Findings	
	Postal survey of EDAP participants	
	Findings	
CHAPTER 6	***The impact of EDAP: personal experience of participants***	27
	Interviews with participants	
	The views of participants	
CHAPTER 7	***The impact of EDAP: summary***	34
CHAPTER 8	***Implications***	36
	For policy-makers	
	For employers	
	For employees and trade unions	
	For educational providers	
REFERENCES		39
APPENDIX		41

Introduction

In Britain, recent years have seen a new interest in the education of adults, mainly because of the profound changes taking place in the world of work. Developments in technology, particularly in information technology, have led to an ever-increasing pace of change in methods of work and the nature of jobs. Alongside this have been major shifts in the world economy, with recession in western countries, and, in Britain, continuing high levels of redundancy and unemployment. As a result, there are new demands on working people, for which their initial education may not have prepared them.

'Flexibility' and 'adaptability', in the workforce as a whole and in workers as individuals, have come to be seen as vital requirements in an economy which is to remain competitive. No longer can young adults enter work with the expectation that the demands of their job will remain broadly the same through their working life, or even that their job will continue to exist. As jobs change, or disappear, to be replaced (hopefully) by new ones, the acquisition by workers of new knowledge and skills will increasingly become necessary at different stages during adulthood. The ability to learn and retrain throughout life, and the need for opportunities to do so, have taken on a vast new significance.

This was clearly the view taken by the Employment Department at the end of the 1980s (Employment Department, 1988), and the Government of the time endorsed the National Education and Training Targets established by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI, 1989). Half of these targets relate to 'lifelong learning', and aim for increased participation in education and training across the whole spectrum of the working population. NIACE sees the targets as "ambitious", and has recently demonstrated that, for them to be achieved, the rate of progress needs to accelerate rapidly (NIACE, 1993, p14). However, the Government's strategy for achieving them is not entirely clear, especially in regard to sections of the population who at present tend not to participate in continuing education.

One such section are semi-skilled and unskilled workers, who currently form a large proportion of the population, and whose involvement will be an essential component of a 'return to learning' on the scale envisaged. So how is it to be achieved? The main educational/training avenues open to these groups are: training provided by employers and taken in work time; part-time courses provided by colleges or other institutions, and taken in people's own time. Is there any evidence that participation through these routes is likely to increase?

Training provided by employers for manual workers tends to be minimal – usually the least amount necessary to enable them to do their present job. Whereas developmental training for skilled or managerial workers may possibly be regarded by employers as an investment, the same is not generally true for manual workers (Training Agency, 1989).

With employers still suffering the effects of recession, the likelihood seems remote that many of them will invest significant amounts of new money in providing training, and paying workers to attend. 'In-service' training for manual workers is therefore likely to remain at a low level, at least for some time to come.

What about part-time courses in employees' own time? In 1992, the Government announced additional funding for the further education sector, and the 'expectation' that enrolments in the sector would increase by 25 per cent over three years. NIACE points out that such a target could be achieved *only* if there were an increase in the numbers of part-time and mature learners (NIACE, 1993, p37). But what is going to lead to a situation where ordinary working people decide to use some of their leisure time to return to formal learning, in many cases for the first time since they left school?

In further and higher education, some of the most notable developments in the last decade have been of particular relevance to mature learners. Access schemes have brought considerable numbers of 'non-traditional' students into higher education. Modular and credit-based courses and transfer schemes; accreditation of prior and experiential learning; workplace learning and assessment schemes – all, in theory, facilitate the combination of work and learning, and mobility between the two.

Yet the majority of the population are as yet untouched by these initiatives. Working people in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs – the very sector of the working population whose lack of formal educational qualifications and skills are seen as most problematic, many of whose jobs are most at risk – remain largely neglected in terms of training from their employers, and, as research has consistently shown, isolated from the world of formal education.

In this context, the Ford Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP) is a ground-breaking initiative. The programme covers all company employees equally, regardless of job or status, thus encompassing several thousand semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and is additional to, and separate from, the company's ongoing arrangements for job-related education and training. Stated simply, a main aim of EDAP is to encourage the most widespread return to learning among Ford employees that it can. It provides financial assistance, together with high quality guidance and support for each and every employee who wishes to take part in an educational/personal development activity of his/her own choice.

In its first four years of operation, EDAP appears to have stimulated among employees a high rate of educational participation in their own time. This makes it a potentially valuable model for initiatives to encourage a widespread return to learning among the working population. Surveys of participation have consistently found manual workers to be low participants; but through EDAP, the indications appear to be that participation among manual workers is as high as for other groups. If this is so, it could represent something of a breakthrough.

This report is of a study of Ford EDAP in the Assembly Plant in Dagenham, where the author has been the full-time Educational Adviser for the scheme since it started. The aim of the study was to verify whether, in fact, there *has* been a significant increase in educational participation among Ford manual workers following the introduction of EDAP; and if so, to identify the features of the scheme which have contributed to its success.

CHAPTER 1

Educational participation among working-class adults

During the last 15 years, there have been several surveys of educational participation among adults in Britain. This chapter provides a brief summary of their findings, mainly drawn from the following six studies: ACACE (1982(a)); Woodley *et al* (1987); FEU (1988); Training Agency (1989); McGivney (1990); and Sargant (1991).

Comparing these surveys with each other can be difficult, since they do not all study the same sections of the adult population. The only two which are directly comparable with each other are ACACE and Sargant, Sargant having modelled her survey on that of ACACE with the specific aim of comparing findings over a ten-year period. However, in spite of their differences, the findings from these various surveys are largely consistent with each other, and reveal certain very clear trends.

Excluding full-time students, ACACE found 10 per cent of the adult population currently participating in education of some kind, and a further 10 per cent who had done so recently (ie, within the previous three years). Corresponding figures from Sargant were 10 per cent and 16 per cent, suggesting a slight increase in overall participation during the 1980s. FEU found 14 per cent of adults currently participating, while a further 32 per cent had done so at least once in the past.

The general finding is that more than half the population is not participating, and has not done so recently. There appear to be three main demographic characteristics which are clearly related to levels of participation. These are

age (younger adults participate more, and older adults participate less);

the amount of initial education (those whose initial education was longest participate most, while those who left school earliest participate least);

socio-economic status (participation is highest among social classes A and B, and lowest among social classes D and E).

Woodley *et al* found working class people "massively underrepresented" among mature students (1987, p71). Sargant found that only 16 per cent of adults from social classes D/E were current or recent participants, compared with 38 per cent from social classes A/B. Of all non-participants, 38 per cent came from social classes D/E, and 12 per cent from classes A/B.

10

The Training Agency found a similar imbalance: 20 per cent of economically active adults from social classes IV/V had had vocational education/training in the previous three years, compared with 48 per cent of classes I/II. There was a steep rise in reported training among people with salaries of more than £6,000. The imbalance was especially marked in training funded by the employer: for every 100 professional/managerial employees (classes I/II), there were 31 experiences of training lasting 3 days or more; for every 100 manual workers (classes IV/V) the figure was only 4.

Analysing adult participation in relation to the length of initial education, Sargant found that, among those who had finished full-time education after the age of 18, 46 per cent had returned and were current or recent participants in formal learning. Of those who left school before the age of 16, only 13 per cent were current or recent participants. There is, of course, a close correlation between membership of social classes D/E and early school-leaving. Both British and American analyses suggest that length of initial education is the single most significant variable (Sargant, 1991; Cross, 1981).

Findings of differential rates of adult participation are not new. For as long as adult education has existed in any formal sense in Britain, one of the main purposes claimed by its practitioners has been to provide 'compensatory' education for the people, mainly working class, who had gained least from their schooling. Yet it has consistently been observed that adult education has attracted the middle classes more than the working classes, and, ironically, the highly educated more than the less educated (Lovett, 1975; Hopper and Osborn, 1975). Nor are these findings unique to Britain – the same trends have been observed in other European countries, the USA, and New Zealand (McGivney 1990). On all sides, it seems, Mee and Wiltshire's "iron law of educational demand" prevails: that people who have already benefitted most from education are more motivated and more successful in obtaining more (1978, p72). Far from being compensatory,

> *"adult education is widening the gap between the educated and the educationally underprivileged by encouraging the former to continue learning and thus keep in step with changing conditions, while the latter group is left in a growing state of maladjustment."*
>
> (Verner and Newberry, 1958, p219)

Recent writers have pointed out the limitations of survey research which demonstrates relationships between demographic characteristics and educational participation: such research, they say, though informative, describes what happens without explaining it. Houle made the point as long ago as 1961 that a major shortcoming of this type of research was that "it describes what men (*sic*) do, and not what they think about what they do, nor why they do it" (1961, p8).

The attempt to discover the reasons which underlie adult participation and non-participation has stimulated what Harrison describes as "a bewildering array of possible theories and explanations" (1993, p9). In Chapter 2, I summarise and comment on some of the main strands of recent studies, with particular reference to working class participation.

Factors affecting participation

Motivational theories

One major grouping of studies and theories is that described by Woodley *et al* (1987) as 'motivational'. These take a psychological approach, focus on the individual participant, and examine the motives and motivations which appear to influence participation. One of the pioneers of this kind of approach was Houle, who identified three motivational 'types':

goal-oriented:	people who take part in learning in order to achieve specific conscious objectives.
learning-oriented:	people who take part in learning 'for its own sake'.
activity-oriented:	people who take part in learning for the sake of the activity itself, rather than the subject-matter.

(Houle, 1961)

More recent researchers have created various types of 'motivational scale', with larger numbers of more detailed categories, but, as Woodley *et,al* (1987) point out, most of these are sub-divisions of Houle's categories, and Houle's typology still commands considerable respect. Subsequent researchers have, however, questioned Houle's assumption that individuals have characteristic orientations which remain constant over time, suggesting that people have multiple motivations which may *change* with time.

In themselves, these motivational studies offer little to explain differential rates of participation among different social groups. There is a general finding that working class participants tend most often to have instrumental motives (goal-oriented), but this does not explain their numerical under-representation in the adult education population.

This recognition that there are additional factors influencing an individual's participation or non-participation led people to try to analyse how internal, psychological factors interact with external circumstances to produce a *decision* to participate (eg Boshier, 1973; Cross, 1981. Cross's model is discussed later in this chapter). In trying to explain why people participate, suggests Courtney, we must take account not only of "underlying psychological factors which are necessary in order for [participation] to take place ... but also of the circumstantial factors which are necessary for learning orientation to be translated into action" (Courtney, 1992 p56).

Situational theories

A second major grouping of studies and theories are those described by Woodley *et al* as 'situational' (1987). These draw on sociology, and explain participation or the lack of it as an *outcome* of social or class position.

Gooderham (1987) suggests that adult participation may be explained by reference group theory, which is to do with the social and cultural groups with which individuals identify. He emphasises the strong identification of manual workers with their peer group, and its influence on behaviour, comparing this with professional workers, who tend to have a wider variety of reference groups.

Group and class identity are identified as powerful influences on adult participation and non-participation. Westwood (1980) and Keddie (1980) refer to the middle class culture and values which permeate every level of the education system. Westwood sees the existing institution of adult education as an expression of middle class cultural values, and therefore perceived as neither attractive nor relevant by working class people.

A number of studies cite feelings expressed by working class adults that they are not comfortable – have a sense of 'not belonging' – in educational environments and institutions. O'Shea and Corrigan (1979) describe the experiences reported by a group of male industrial workers participating in a project which took them through informal, then formal, education to degree level. Despite the fact that the project was specifically designed in such a way as to reduce "the physical and cultural distance that separated adult education from the lives of working people" (p229), the men reported feeling a conflict between the expectations and demands of educational institutions, and those of their own class background. It seemed that both for the men themselves, and for their families and friends, participating in education meant 'leaving' their class. Similarly, Holmes and Storrie (1985), in their study of an educational project for redundant steelworkers, describe among the working men a powerful class-consciousness and feeling of separation from the world of education and middle-class occupations.

Sociologists tend to see adult education as an integral part of the whole education system. The low level of participation in *adult* education among working classes is linked to the fact that they derive the least benefit from *initial* education. Since working class children as a group leave initial education earliest, and with the least 'success', it is unsurprising that they do not return to the system as adults. Courtney challenges the oft-quoted 'irony' that those who most need adult education in fact use it least:

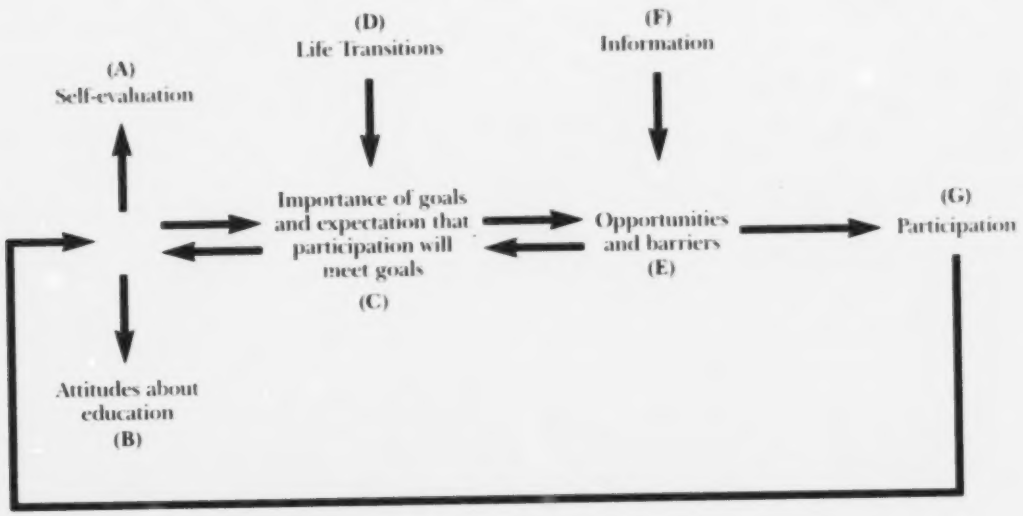
> *"...is it really such an irony? Might it not be more accurate to say that those who need it most participate most; that adult education is the domain of the middle class because it is they who have already benefitted from the educational system in relation to jobs and wish to do so again? If this is really the case, researchers should not continue to look for an answer to non-participation and drop-out in the motivation and underlying personality characteristics of 'disadvantaged' adults.... Instead, they ought to ask whether the institutions are really designed for those who appear to need education most."*
>
> (1992, pp145-6)

O'Shea and Corrigan (1979) and Harrison (1993) reach similar conclusions: that the key to increasing working-class participation lies in institutional change. There is a need to "enter the domain of the learner, take on board their perspective, experience, attitudes and expectations" (Harrison 1993, p7).

Composite/decision-model theories

A third grouping of theories is that described by McGivney (1990) as 'composite theories'. These are models which draw together internal (psychological) and external factors which influence participation, and show how they interact to lead to a decision to participate or not.

Cross (1981) examines four such theories, and synthesises the ideas they contain into a model which she calls a 'chain of response'. Her model is presented as a continuum in which certain conditions have to be met at each stage in the 'chain' for participation to be the outcome:



Cross: Chain-of-Response Model for understanding participation in adult learning activities

Thus at the starting point (A), the requirement is that the individual has sufficient self-esteem and a sufficiently positive attitude to education (influenced, for example, by previous experience and/or peer-group pressures) to be motivated to participate. If these conditions are met, a further requirement is the possession (influenced perhaps by life transitions) of motivating goals, and an expectation that they can be met through participation. If these conditions are also met, external circumstances become relevant, and whether the outcome is participation will depend on the existence of opportunities (and perhaps information about them) or barriers.

A particular strength of Cross's theoretical model lies in its clear relevance and appeal to the practitioner. Each of its stages identifies an area where intervention might be possible to facilitate or encourage participation. After presenting the model, Cross goes on to provide illustrations of how institutional action has been, or could be, taken in order to affect particular parts of the chain. The model also portrays graphically the possible ineffectiveness of *isolated* interventions. The provision of an opportunity, for example, may not be sufficient to produce participation unless it is relevant to a potential learner's goals, and the learner has the necessary information to foresee that they will be met.

Barriers and deterrents

A number of studies have focussed specifically on non-participants, the usual approach being to ask them why they do not participate. This has led to the identification of various types of 'barriers' to participation.

Cross (1981) reviews American studies, and admits that this type of approach has many methodological problems which call for some caution in relying on findings. One of the difficulties with questionnaires/interviews which ask people about their motivations is the assumption that people a) are *aware* of their reasons for acting; and b) will report them accurately and honestly. The situation becomes even more problematic when asking people their reasons for *not* doing something.

A further problem lies in defining the nature of barriers, as perceived by respondents. A working lone parent, for example, who cannot afford to pay for child-care in order to attend a leisure-time class may equally well interpret the 'barrier' as family responsibilities, lack of time, or cost. Nevertheless, Cross feels that "there is enough consistency in the findings to give a generalised picture of what people say deters them from participating in adult learning activities" (1981 p98). While acknowledging the overlap between categories, she identifies three types of barrier:

> *Situational barriers:* those arising from an individual's situation in life at a given time. Include such things as home and work responsibilities; cost; lack of time; lack of transportation.
>
> *Institutional barriers:* curriculum, environment or procedures in educational institutions which prevent or discourage participation. Include such things as lack of information about learning opportunities; inconvenient scheduling of courses; entry requirements.
>
> *Dispositional barriers:* those related to an individual's attitudes to education, and perceptions of himself/herself as a learner. Include such things as lack of interest; lack of confidence; feeling 'too old to learn'.

ACACE (1982(b)) uses a broadly similar categorisation of barriers. McGivney (1990), while seeing them as oversimplified, accepts them as a useful starting point for considering non-participation. She analyses interview responses in order to find out which barriers specifically affect manual workers, who are "the most difficult to recruit to educational activities". This, she says, appears to be due to "a powerful combination of dispositional and situational barriers", which she lists as follows:

> *time constraints, especially for those doing part-time or shift work at unsociable hours; low educational achievement; lack of confidence in ability to learn; lack of awareness of learning needs; low perceived value of education; education not considered as part of reference group norms; education seen as incompatible with traditional male bread-winning role, and inappropriate for women; fear that return to learning would be degrading and involve loss of face; low expectations (few prospects of change of work or promotion); resistance to influence by other social groups; place of residence.*
>
> (1990, pp80-81)

What is perhaps most striking about this list is not what it contains, but what it does not contain: any reference to institutional barriers. This list in fact illustrates the weakness in the commonly-accepted typology of 'barriers': the inability clearly to distinguish between 'internal' and 'external' barriers can lead to what *could* be misleading conclusions. For it could be argued that most of these so-called dispositional barriers are in fact *institutional* barriers: perhaps the problem is not manual workers' negative attitudes, low self-esteem and hostility towards education, but rather a failure on the part of institutions to provide suitable programmes for manual workers, at a suitable time, in a suitable place, and to ensure the information, encouragement and positive experiences which would stimulate participation.

McIntosh and Woodley provide an interesting comparison. In discussing the difficulties faced by working people in studying with the Open University, they concentrate not on the learners, but on aspects of the institution which act as deterrents: the summer school requirement which obliges working class people to sacrifice a week out of their short annual holiday, while many professional people receive paid leave to attend; the credit exemption system which means that virtually all working class students must study for at least six years, while others may be able to graduate in two or three; the much heavier financial burdens for students on low incomes of having to meet the cost of fees, books, and a good home study environment (1975, quoted in Cross, 1981 pp105-6).

The following paragraphs summarise the research findings on what are commonly identified as the major barriers and deterrents to adult learners, particularly as they affect working class people.

Cost

For certain groups of potential learners, cost can clearly be a barrier (for example in relation to full-time education, or people with little or no capital or regular income). However, despite the fact that it is so frequently mentioned as a barrier, there is remarkably little clear evidence as to its real impact in relation to part-time learning.

In the ACACE study (1982(b)), cost is the most frequently stated reason (26 per cent of respondents) for not taking up part-time study. The Training Agency (1989) found that 26 per cent of all respondents, and 21 per cent of those in employment, gave inability to pay fees as an obstacle. In the US, cost is one of the two most frequently cited barriers, and is mentioned far more often by low income groups (Cross, 1981). There is also some non-survey evidence to support the theory of cost as a deterrent. Both in the US and in Britain, sharp falls in participation in part-time study have followed increases in fees (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978; Cross, 1981; ACACE, 1982(b)).

However, statements about cost in self-report surveys are extremely difficult to interpret, for several reasons: (i) Inability to pay is a comparatively socially acceptable reason for not participating, and, though stated, may not be the real reason. (ii) It has frequently been found that respondents citing cost as a barrier have little or no idea of how much courses actually cost. (iii) The 'cost' of participating may not simply be the price of a course. For an hourly-paid worker who forgoes overtime in order to attend an evening class, the 'cost' of lost overtime earnings is likely to be much higher than the actual price of the class. (iv) Ability to pay is not the same as willingness to pay.

Lack of time

Lack of time is the second most frequently stated barrier. In the FEU's study, it is mentioned by 50 per cent of non-participating respondents; in the Training Agency's, by 24 per cent of all respondents, and 27 per cent of those in employment; and by similarly high proportions in American studies (FEU, 1988; Training Agency, 1989; Cross, 1981).

These findings suffer from interpretation difficulties similar to those with cost: lack of time may be stated simply because of the need to find a reason, or because it is more socially acceptable than other reasons; and may reflect a person's priorities rather than actual availability of time.

Lack of information

Lack of information is one of the principal reasons stated by FEU's respondents for being unlikely to enrol (1988). Osborn, Withnall and Charnley find that up to two-thirds of non-participants do not know what learning opportunities exist (1980); ACACE that 59 per cent of non-participants do not know who arranges courses for adults in their area, and that less than 10 per cent could estimate the approximate cost of a once-weekly evening class (1982(a)).

Attitudes

ACACE assert that "the major unstated barrier to access [to continuing education] is probably the attitude which assumes that education is only for the young as a preparation for adult life" (1982 (b), p66). McGivney supports this view: "the most powerful barrier to access is attitudes and expectations. Education is simply not part of the value system and behaviour pattern of a disturbing number of people" (1990, p4). Over 60 per cent of non-participants interviewed claimed to have no interest in adult education (ibid, p25); similarly, Sargant finds that among non-participants "more than half of them (58 per cent) did not want to learn about anything new" (1991, p21).

Lack of interest is closely linked with lack of confidence among those with minimal initial education: "...the education system has systematically and effectively labelled some people as successful learners, and others as failures. Those who have accepted that they are failures are less likely...to seek to re-enter the scene of that former failure" (ACACE, 1982(b), p66). Holmes and Storrie asked ex-steelworkers who ***had*** enrolled on a post-redundancy education programme if they knew the reasons why other colleagues had not enrolled. The reasons reported were: "fear that the course would be like school; embarrassment or shame at their low educational level; lack of confidence in ability to learn; fear of being laughed at by others; and a feeling that to return to education would be degrading involving a loss of pride" (1985, p64).

McGivney refers to the practical obstacles that prevent individuals from taking up educational opportunities, but sees "dispositional factors" as "perhaps the most powerful deterrents to participation" (1990, p22). For her, the negative attitudes expressed by many of her working class respondents go beyond lack of interest and diffidence. They reveal, she says, "strong hostility" towards education, and "resistance to voluntary learning" (ibid, p22, p81). She does not, however, provide examples of respondents' views which she feels constitute "strong hostility"; nor does she substantiate her claim that "many people in working-class occupations are hostile to the education 'system' hence to education in general" (ibid, p81).

As suggested earlier, research findings on barriers and deterrents suffer from some serious shortcomings. It is always problematic asking people to identify the reasons why they have *not* done something. Non-participants, virtually by definition, have little contact with educational providers and institutions, and little knowledge of them. They are simply not in a position, therefore, to be aware of aspects of institutions which may be 'excluding' them. Inevitably, when asked to identify reasons for non-participation, they look to things which are within their experience (their own thoughts and feelings, their own circumstances), and do not consider things of which they are unaware. The non-participant is thus *unlikely* to say: *'The local college fails to attract me'* or *'fails to offer courses which are relevant to me or in a format which makes it possible for me to attend'*; but is *likely* to say: *'I'm not interested in education'*; or *'I haven't got time to attend a course'*.

Our understanding of the factors influencing participation might be increased by taking an alternative approach. Instead of non-participants being asked why they do *not* take part, new participants could be asked why they *do* – or more precisely, why they enrol, and what has contributed to their decision to do so. This may throw a different light on factors which prevented or dissuaded them from doing so previously.

The recent introduction of Ford EDAP offered an unusual opportunity to try out this different approach, since it provided access to a 'cohort' of people who came from a section of the population whose participation is generally low, and who had recently made a new decision to participate. Chapter 6 reports on a programme of interviews with some of these new participants.

CHAPTER 3

Employee Development and Ford EDAP

What is Employee Development?

A number of British employers have started using the term 'employee development' in recent years. In most cases, this reflects the fact that the company has introduced a new policy and programme related to education and training for employees which is wider than, or different in nature from, a previously existing training function. Ford took the lead with its Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP), and a number of companies have followed, many modelling their schemes to at least some extent on the EDAP model.

The detailed features of these schemes vary from one company to another, but it is widely accepted that 'employee development' represents a different concept from that traditionally understood as training. Regrettably, however, some people have simply adopted the term 'employee development' to describe what they used to refer to as 'training' (presumably because it sounds grander!). This means that some caution is required in the use of the term 'employee development', because it is used to mean different things by different people.

The Leeds Adult Learners at Work Project examined a number of schemes in an attempt to identify their characteristic features. This led them to a definition which I consider captures the essence of what is new and different about 'employee development', and their definition is quoted here in full. It is this vision of employee development on which my comments in this volume are based.

Employee Development

"training and education initiatives in the workplace which

a) provide a major focus on the personal development of employees. ED schemes may encompass job related training but are broader than job-specific training;

b) provide learning opportunities for substantial sections of the workforce previously excluded from job-specific training and educational initiatives (especially for those employees with limited previous formal education experience);

c) provide an employee-centred learning approach with learning choices and opportunities available to participants;

d) provide continuous learning opportunities rather than a one-off opportunity;

e) involve employees and/or their trade unions in the origins and administration of the programme;

f) encourage the right to learning while at work."

Leeds Adult Learners at Work Project. Final Report, (1993, p.3)

The Ford EDAP scheme conforms to all the criteria listed by the Leeds Adult Learners at Work project. However, there is one particular feature which sets it apart from many other employee development schemes, and which perhaps should be highlighted here. In some organisations, the employee development scheme includes training linked to an individual's existing job. EDAP, however, is separate and distinct from the company's existing training department, which continues to be responsible for training which is job-specific, or directly related to job progression. Learning activities supported by EDAP, while they *may* be vocational in nature, explicitly *exclude* training directly related to an employee's current job.

The 'philosophy' underlying employee development is that, leaving aside job-specific training, there are benefits for both employees and employers when employees participate in education related to personal goals arising from their own interests. While the benefits for individuals are self-evident, those for employers are perhaps less so. One is that such participation is seen as improving the quality of life of employees, offering the employer the prospect of a better-adjusted, and thus more productive, workforce. Another is that, as with the provision of all fringe benefits, the employee will feel more loyalty to the employer.

But it is not simply the perceived benefits to individuals and employers which have stimulated interest in employee development schemes in recent years. There is a growing belief that economic and technological change have created the need for education and training to play a new and expanded role in the lives of working adults. In the past, employment has been relatively stable, and there has been a high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Minimal training was sufficient to equip people to do jobs which they might fill for many years, or throughout their working lives. Current trends, however, are towards a situation where the demands made by jobs change more quickly, and people have to change jobs more frequently. In the workforce and indeed in society as a whole, adaptability and flexibility are seen as vital qualities – qualities which depend heavily on the ability to learn.

Minimal, job-specific, skills-oriented training will not be sufficient to cultivate adaptability and flexibility: these are qualities which require broad, transferable skills, and conceptual and cognitive abilities, which develop through the process of learning itself. The need is for abilities that are acquired through the *habit* of learning; hence, in an employee development scheme, *what* employees are learning is less important than *that* they are learning. This is reflected in another significant feature of EDAP: although the activities which employees take part in have to conform to certain criteria, each individual's activities are confidential – the company does not *know* what any specific individual is learning.

Ford EDAP

The Ford UK Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP) was established through an agreement in 1987 between Ford Motor Company and the trade unions representing its hourly-paid and white collar employees. Coming into operation in 1989, EDAP was modelled to some extent on a similar scheme run by Ford US, but differs in several respects.

A fundamental principle of the scheme is that it is available to all employees. Widespread involvement is therefore a major objective, and, in its first few years of operation, EDAP has concentrated many of its efforts on encouraging as many employees as possible to take part. In manufacturing plants, this has meant 'targetting' precisely that group whom the adult education system has until now largely failed to reach: manual workers.

Based on experience in the US, the Company estimated that 5 per cent of the British workforce would use the scheme in its first year. In fact, this figure was vastly exceeded. It was impossible, because of the phasing-in arrangements which were made, to put a precise figure on EDAP participation in the Assembly Plant in the first year of operation. A reasonable estimate, based on all grades of employees, was that it was between 20 per cent and 30 per cent – a participation rate which educationalists would regard as startlingly high.

The aim of the research described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study was

a) to measure the EDAP participation rate accurately, and establish a basis for comparison between EDAP participation and educational participation among adults in general; and

b) (assuming that the comparatively high participation rate was confirmed) to find out what it was about the scheme which led to the high participation rate.

How the Ford EDAP scheme works

The original agreement established a fund to pay for the administration of the scheme, and to provide financial grants for individual employees participating. Within each plant, a tripartite local EDAP committee was established, with one third of its members drawn from company management, one third from hourly-paid trade unionists, and one third from salaried union representatives. Each local committee is responsible for its own budget, and, within the broad nationally agreed guidelines, decides what kinds of activity plant employees can receive financial support for. This provides an important element of local flexibility, since the nature of the workforce and their educational needs/demands varies considerably from plant to plant.

The scheme offers assistance to every employee who wishes to undertake some form of 'personal development', which is deemed to include **a)** educational activities; and **b)** activities to promote a healthy lifestyle. (In the Dagenham Assembly Plant, where the research for this study was carried out, health promotion accounts for only a small proportion of overall EDAP participation. Since education is the focus of this study, participation in health promotion activities has been excluded from my discussion, and from the findings in Chapters 5 and 6.) The criteria used for approving educational activities are: (i) a structured learning process must be a central component; (ii) the provider must be a recognised education/training institution, or a qualified

tutor/instructor; (iii) the activity must *not* be directly related to the participant's job within the Company.

An employee may take any course of her/his choice. Provided it meets the above criteria, s/he is entitled to a grant to cover course fees, up to a maximum of £200 per year. An individual can take as many courses as s/he wishes and can 'top up' the grant personally if the cost exceeds £200. The entitlement is renewed every year. The company does not give paid release for EDAP activities: courses must be taken outside the employee's normal working hours.

The fund paid for the appointment of a Local Education Adviser for each plant, who is responsible for managing the scheme within the plant, on behalf of the local committee. The Education Adviser is an education professional employed, not by the company, but by an educational institution (University of East London). This independence is considered an important element of the scheme. Not belonging to any of the three interest groups involved, s/he can provide the local committee with independent advice; and for employees is a source of confidential advice and support, separate from the company hierarchy.

I was appointed at the outset of the scheme as Education Adviser for the Dagenham Assembly Plant, and this account of the scheme is based on my personal experience. In addition to myself, the EDAP Office has two administrative staff. Although not Ford employees, EDAP staff work full-time in the plant, and tend to see themselves as part of the 'community' of the plant and its employees. Within broad policy guidelines set by the committee, the EDAP Office is responsible for all aspects of the day-to-day management and operation of the scheme. The following paragraphs describe some of its main functions directly concerned with employees' educational activities.

Information

The EDAP Office provides a comprehensive information service within the plant, with up-to-date information on educational opportunities available through local colleges, commercial providers, and distance learning. It is open every day (including lunch-breaks: for some workers, the only time that they can get away from the production line). Employees are free to browse among various brochures and materials from educational providers, and can call in with enquiries and for advice at any time without an appointment.

Publicity

As well as responding to requests for information, EDAP staff take a major proactive role through mounting various forms of publicity aimed at employees: to stimulate their curiosity about EDAP and what it has to offer; to make them aware of the variety of opportunities available; and to advertise specific activities which are likely to catch their interest.

Administration

All applications for EDAP support are channelled through the EDAP Office, as are the payments of grant. Payments are made, not to participants personally, but to the course providers. Processing many hundreds of applications per year, and administering payments to a wide variety of providers, create a considerable administrative work-load. Various new systems and procedures needed to be created, based on a computerised database.

Quality assurance

Although the approval and processing of applications is to some extent a routine administrative process, associated with it is an important quality assurance dimension. As well as checking that applications conform to the general criteria for approval, the Educational Adviser is responsible for value for money. This means not only monitoring that providers and courses are of high quality, but also discussing with applicants whether proposed courses are appropriate to their needs and objectives.

Liaising with course providers

It was assumed from the outset of EDAP that most employees would have little knowledge about the organisation of colleges, the types or structure of courses on offer, entry requirements, or the expectations colleges would have of potential students; also, that they would be diffident about approaching institutions for information, or when faced with the unfamiliar formalities and practicalities of applications and enrolments. EDAP staff therefore provide a kind of secretarial service which 'eases' them through these processes. For employees seeking information, the EDAP Office offers to make and receive phone-calls, or write letters, on their behalf; pass messages; make appointments to meet course-leaders or tutors in colleges. If an employee decides to make an enrolment, EDAP staff ensure that the procedure is as smooth and simple as possible.

Guidance and support

The Education Adviser offers initial advice and guidance for all potential participants. S/he is also a source of ongoing guidance and support for employees who have embarked on a course, an important role, often not carried out by providers themselves: many colleges which routinely provide personal tutors for full-time students do little or nothing of this kind for part-time students, possibly because of assumptions that are made about adult students, possibly because of practical constraints. In any event, the EDAP Adviser is perhaps better placed to carry out this role, through having a close knowledge of the student's work situation; being more easily accessible than a member of college staff might be; and being able to monitor and support progression from one course and provider to another.

Organising in-plant activities

As well as referring participants to courses in various institutions outside the workplace, EDAP also arranges, where demand is sufficient, for courses to be run within the plant. This is done through liaison with local colleges. The Educational Adviser negotiates costs, and agrees the curriculum with the provider; recruits participants; and arranges for the necessary facilities to be available for the tutor to deliver the course in-plant.

One of the aims of this study was to find out whether the establishment of this 'service' was instrumental in stimulating increased educational participation among the workforce. Chapter 4 considers in more detail some of the ways EDAP's activities and initiatives may have stimulated/facilitated educational participation.

CHAPTER 4

EDAP's role in stimulating participation

On the face of it, it appears that, since the introduction of EDAP, a large number of Assembly Plant employees have made a new decision to participate in education. This chapter examines some of the features of the scheme which might reasonably be assumed to have had some influence in these decisions. The discussion is organised under four main headings borrowed from Cross's Chain of Response Model.

Learner's self-evaluation

The individual's evaluation of his/her learning ability results largely from previous experience of learning, and is likely to change only through further experience. The previously 'unsuccessful' learner, with a negative self-evaluation, is in a kind of trap – a decision to participate requires a positive self-evaluation which itself may only be engendered through positive experience of participation. The institution can do little or nothing to change the individual's self-perception, except indirectly – by making the learner's new step into participation as easy as possible, and reducing to a minimum the possibility that any outcome will be perceived as failure.

Cross suggests that this implies the provision of educational opportunities "with low levels of risk and threat" (1981 p133). This is reflected in EDAP's early and continuing policy of not placing demands/expectations on participants. Participants are encouraged, if they wish, to enrol for a course 'just to try it out'. Where possible, courses are organised in short modules which do not call for a long-term commitment from the student. No sanctions or disapproval are attached to non-completion or non-attendance.

Attitudes to education

EDAP uses various methods to project a positive view of the benefits and pleasures of education, and to demonstrate that these can be enjoyed by all adults, whatever their previous educational experience. At an individual level, publicity can perhaps counter the perception that education is hard work or unpleasant, or that it cannot be enjoyed by an adult with limited previous educational achievement.

More important may be the effect on group perceptions and attitudes. The powerful effect of peer-group pressure has been noted. If non-participation is seen to be the norm, educational participation is unlikely to increase. Publicity is therefore given to the fact that a large and growing number of employees already participate in the scheme.

In this respect, the active support of EDAP by the trade unions in the plant is clearly

vital. The Plant Convenor and senior union representatives play a key role on the EDAP Committee, and shop stewards generally encourage their members to see EDAP as belonging to the workers themselves. Personal observation seems to confirm that individual employees are strongly influenced by the fact that their own representatives share control of the scheme, and that shop stewards encourage participation.

However, major changes in attitude do not normally happen quickly or easily; indeed, psychological studies show that attitudes initially show great resistance when under pressure to change. If attitude change were a prerequisite for increased educational participation among working class people, one would expect the initial EDAP participation rate to have been near the norm for the general population, and to have taken a considerable time to show any change. This has not been the case: a comparatively high participation rate was a feature of EDAP from the very beginning. Whatever it was that stimulated it, it seems unlikely that the main ingredient was attitude change. This suggests that attitudes towards education among the group concerned were initially much less negative and hostile than might be assumed from the findings of, for example, ACACE (1982(b)) and McGivney (1990).

Goals and expectations

Cross points out that an individual's decision to participate in education will be influenced by a) whether s/he has goals which s/he considers important, and b) whether s/he believes participation will achieve those goals. The importance which individuals attach to their goals is unlikely to be directly influenced by EDAP, but EDAP may well have an influence on an employee's expectations about whether participation might help *meet* their goals.

The participation surveys reviewed in Chapter 1 suggest that working class people tend to perceive adult education as not being relevant to their needs. The high level of publicity about EDAP within the plant is a direct attempt to counter this perception. Emphasis is placed on the useful and enjoyable outcomes of education for ordinary people, on the fact that unrealised 'ambitions' may be achievable through learning, and on the beneficial outcomes enjoyed by existing participants. Of course, this type of publicity is used by many adult educational institutions, aimed at the general public; its location in the workplace is likely to be more effective, both because employees come into more frequent contact with it, and because the message is clearly aimed at *them*.

In its guidance and counselling aspect, EDAP has a role in helping to *clarify* goals. It is common for an employee to approach EDAP with a request for a course, for example, "to improve my English", or "to learn computer programming", and a considerable amount of help and information may be required from the EDAP Adviser in defining these objectives in sufficient detail to select an appropriate course. Other employees approach the scheme with an objective where the *subject* of study is initially of secondary importance, for example: "I want to learn a skill so that I've got something to fall back on if I'm ever made redundant". Again, counselling from EDAP is crucial in defining the goal more precisely.

Opportunities and barriers

Before I joined EDAP as Educational Adviser, I had had considerable experience both in colleges providing education for adults, and of delivering training in a wide variety of workplaces. This had given me, I believe, a better perception than most practitioners of the barriers and difficulties which separated working adults and educational institutions.

Nevertheless, it was only from within the Plant that I came to realise the true extent of the situational and institutional barriers facing potential learners – and the extent to which institutions have in the past failed to take account of them. The attempt to remove (or, in some cases, to 'work round') these barriers has led to initiatives both within the Plant, and in partnership with local colleges and other providers.

Financial incentive

When EDAP was established, there was an obvious assumption that financial grants would be an incentive for employees to participate. This assumption seems common-sense enough, but defining how exactly such a financial incentive works is not easy. It is assumed to remove a 'barrier', but distinguishing whether the barrier is inability to pay or unwillingness to pay is virtually impossible, as Cross (1981) and others have suggested. The relationship between participation, its cost to the participant, and the effect of financial incentives is an extremely complex one, and difficult to pin down, partly because both cost and value are ultimately subjective judgements, partly also because, in British culture at least, the relationship between wealth and self-esteem makes it difficult for people to be 'honest' with themselves or others about the power of money as a motivator.

Nevertheless, there appears to be strong objective evidence that EDAP's financial incentive is effective. When the scheme was first announced, employees were invited to apply immediately. At this stage, no EDAP staff had yet been appointed, and no structures were yet in place for providing information and guidance, or any of the other services and support which have subsequently been developed. Yet several hundred applications were received in the first three months, during which time the financial incentive was the only apparent factor which could have stimulated EDAP participation. Given that over 60 per cent of survey respondents (see Chapter 5) said they had not participated in formal learning since leaving school, it is reasonable to assume that a large proportion of applicants during the first few months of the scheme were *new* participants in education, and that the financial incentive was a major influencing factor.

Course formats and class times

As suggested by McGivney (1990), shift work appears to be an important factor affecting educational activity among working people. The standard evening class, meeting at the same time each week, effectively excludes all those people who work the rotating three-shift pattern commonly found in industry, since students would have to miss one week in three through being at work. Very few colleges offer courses in a format which would enable these workers to attend (eg. five consecutive half-days, or full days at weekends).

Virtually all production workers in the Assembly Plant work shifts. Some work the three-shift pattern, but the majority work an alternating two-shift pattern of two weeks on days (8.00am till 5.00pm) followed by two weeks on nights (9.30pm till 7.00am). On the face of it, these workers *could* attend an early evening class at the same time each week. However, many have long journeys to and from work; many do not have cars, and rely on lifts from co-workers at fixed regular times to get to work; while many of those who do have a car have complicated arrangements for sharing its use with a partner who works different hours. For many, therefore, there are enormous practical difficulties in organising journeys between home, work, and college, to attend a class which finishes at 9.00 or 9.30pm, and still arrive at the plant in time for the start of the night-shift. Added to these practical problems is the fact that, for most of these shift-workers, the few early evening hours they are able to spend with their family are particularly precious.

Viewed from the EDAP Office, it was clear that some of these time and travel problems could be alleviated if employees, regardless of their place of residence, were able to enrol on courses at the two colleges closest to the Plant. At the time, however, college regulations made this difficult, since 'out-of-borough' students were offered places only if they were unfilled by local residents, and were required to pay higher fees. Following representations from EDAP, the two colleges nearest to the plant agreed to accept EDAP participants on the same basis as local students. When made aware of the difficulties, both colleges also proved flexible in making individual arrangements to help three-shift workers.

This type of intervention is a powerful illustration of the effectiveness of EDAP as an agency. Two major colleges and the Ford Dagenham complex with 15,000 workers had been neighbours for 25 years; yet it was only with the advent of EDAP, with staff who could develop an understanding of the constraints affecting both sides, that barriers between the institutions were clearly identified, and steps taken to remove them.

Enrolments

In the first September of its operation, many employees complained to EDAP that they had been unable to enrol on college courses because enrolment arrangements were incompatible with their working hours. At that time, the standard procedure for enrolling was for would-be students to queue up on college enrolment evenings to register. Few colleges accepted postal enrolments, or made any provision for students unable to attend enrolment evenings. Workers from the Plant had gone to the first enrolment evening, queued for as long as two hours, and then, before reaching the front of the queue, had to leave in order to get to their night shift. On their return the following evening, they found the class they wanted was full.

EDAP approached the colleges concerned, to explore ways of getting round this problem. Two of the largest were unwilling to consider any variation to their procedures, one of them stating, extraordinarily enough, that making special arrangements for these shift workers would give them an unfair advantage, and be contrary to the college's equal opportunities policy! (Not surprisingly, although both of these colleges have hundreds of Ford workers living in their catchment areas, very few of them attend courses there.)

Other colleges, however, once made aware of the problem, were again most responsive. In partnership with EDAP, a scheme was designed whereby they not only accepted telephone or postal bookings made by EDAP on behalf of employees, but also sent college representatives to the Plant to provide detailed course information for employees who were interested, and accept enrolments on the spot.

Liaising with providers

For any individual considering enrolling for a course, obtaining the necessary information and completing the formalities for registration can be a daunting process. The college receptionist may know little more than the title of courses on offer. The potential participant who wants to know, for example, what the course syllabus includes, what forms of assessment there are, or whether entry requirements can be waived for a mature entrant, will have to find out which member of staff s/he needs to speak to; make contact, perhaps by leaving messages in a busy staff room and asking for messages to be returned; and, once contact is made, know what questions to ask to elicit the required information. If the result is unsatisfactory, the enquirer may have to start over again with another provider. This sort of process is difficult enough for somebody with considerable knowledge and previous experience of dealing with educational institutions. For a potential participant

who has been away from education for 20 years or more, has little or no experience of any post-school education, and may be lacking in confidence, it can represent a major barrier.

Whereas many workers these days have easy access to a telephone, the production worker who wishes to make a call has to get release from the line (never easy), and use a pay-phone surrounded by noisy machinery; and may not be able to rely on receiving incoming calls or messages. Of course, there are individuals who are sufficiently motivated and resourceful to overcome such difficulties by themselves. But industrial workers in general find themselves in the same situation as all disadvantaged groups: without some support, the achievement of success may require a much higher level of motivation than is needed by others starting from a more advantaged position.

EDAP helps potential participants overcome some of these problems by liaising with providers on their behalf. If an employee expresses an interest in a particular learning activity, EDAP staff will, if necessary, search among providers for something which is suitable, and compatible with the employee's goals, previous experience and personal circumstances; and do everything necessary to effect an enrolment. This often requires a very good 'understanding of the system', a considerable amount of time, and a high degree of persistence. Once an employee has shown *motivation* for learning, EDAP staff ensure that no administrative or institutional barriers are allowed to prevent the interest being converted into activity.

In-plant courses

Soon after EDAP started, it was clear that, for some workers, the various barriers which prevented attendance on college courses could not easily be overcome. However, needs surveys among employees suggested that many would be able to attend courses if they could be provided in-plant, immediately before or after shifts.

Where a number of employees were interested in a similar type of course, therefore, their individual financial grants were 'pooled', and EDAP arranged for local providers to mount courses in-plant. The range of courses which can be offered in this way is necessarily limited, since a sufficient number of participants is required to make a specific course financially viable. Nevertheless, in-plant courses have proved to be extremely popular. In the three years since the Plant EDAP Committee decided to invest in its own facilities, 148 production workers have taken part in a total of 7,400 hours of computer training in-plant before or after their shifts; while 177 have enrolled for car maintenance classes. In partnership with the Open University, EDAP has established a Group Foundation Course, with tutorials held on Saturday mornings. To date, 27 production workers have started working their way towards a part-time degree through this route.

The popularity of in-plant courses seems significant. Many employees approach EDAP, not with a request for a specific course of study, but saying: "I'd like to do a course. What's available in-plant?" This suggests a desire for learning which is not necessarily governed by specific, instrumental motives. These people, it seems, want to learn, and are prepared to be flexible about *what* they learn, provided it can be fitted in with the other constraints on their lives.

CHAPTER 5

The impact of EDAP: participation rates

Analysis of EDAP records

An analysis was carried out of EDAP records covering a three-year period. The aim of the analysis was to establish a figure for the educational participation rate among manual workers in the Plant, which could provide a valid comparison with participation rates for the overall population.

As mentioned earlier, some of the activities undertaken through EDAP would not fall within the range of what is generally regarded as 'educational', and these types of activity would not have featured in surveys of the general population reported in Chapter 1. Some sorting of EDAP records was therefore required, in order to exclude such activities, and ensure that like was being compared with like. The three-year period was chosen in order to facilitate comparison with ACACE (1982(a)), Sargant (1991), and the Training Agency (1989), who all define current/recent participation in this way.

A count was made of how many hourly-paid employees had taken one course or more through EDAP in the relevant period. The analysis showed that 1,374 employees were currently participating or had done so recently. The average headcount of hourly-paid employees in the plant over the relevant period was 3,215. Thus 42 per cent of this group were current or recent participants.

It is not possible to know to what extent manual workers in the Dagenham Plant are representative of manual workers in general. There is no reason to believe they are untypical, except in one marked characteristic: the very high proportion of employees from minority ethnic groups (54 per cent). Previous studies are unhelpful in suggesting what effect this would be likely to have on participation figures. Indeed, they are contradictory. McGivney(1990) considers minority ethnic groups to be significantly low participators, while Sargant says that "participation among ethnic groups (*sic*) ... is higher than for the white population" (1991, p13). This being the case, and since my own analysis showed that EDAP participation by minority ethnic groups was broadly in proportion to their representation in the workforce, no special consideration was given to ethnicity in my analysis.

It should also be noted that the Dagenham workforce is predominantly male (93 per cent). However, previous studies of the population as a whole have not indicated obvious differences in participation rates between male and female manual workers, and the only point to be made here is that male/female EDAP participation is in proportion to the representation of men and women in the workforce.

Unfortunately, a simple, direct comparison cannot be made between EDAP participation and any single one of the published surveys reported in Chapter 1. This is because of differences in the populations studied, and the educational activities included. The study with a survey population almost identical to EDAP's (i.e. economically active adults) is the Training Agency's (1989). However, the *activities* surveyed by the Training Agency included all job-related training (which is not included in EDAP activities) and excluded non-vocational education (which is covered by EDAP). The survey population covered by ACACE (1982(a)) and Sargant (1991) included the non-economically active, which EDAP does not. But the activities they surveyed (apart from the fact that they included job-related training) were closely in line with EDAP-approved activities. Overall, Sargant offers the best comparison.

Sargant distinguishes 'formal' and 'informal' learning. Courses taken through EDAP belong to the former category, so the relevant figures from Sargant are those for formal learning. She finds that 16 per cent of social class D/E adults have participated in formal learning in the past three years.

Sargant's figure includes the non-economically active, whereas the EDAP 'population' consists only of the economically active. Given that ACACE, Sargant and McGivney all find the non-economically active to be low participants, it can be assumed that, were they excluded from consideration, Sargant's 16 per cent figure would be somewhat higher. On the other hand, her 16 per cent figure includes people doing job-related training, while the EDAP 'population' does not. If job-related training were excluded, Sargant's 16 per cent figure would be somewhat lower. For practical purposes, therefore, Sargant's figure of 16 per cent provides a good 'benchmark' against which to measure EDAP participation.

Thus it can be said that the participation rate for working class adults through EDAP is 42 per cent, as against a comparable national figure of 16 per cent. Despite the slight uncertainty of the latter figure, participation through EDAP can safely be said to be two or three times as high as for the population as a whole. Moreover, the participation rate through EDAP for social classes D/E is slightly higher than that of social classes A/B (the highest participants) in the population as a whole (Table 1).

All social class D/E adults (Sargant, 1991)	16 per cent
All social class A/B adults (Sargant, 1991)	38 per cent
Dagenham Assembly Plant social class D/E employees	42 per cent

Table 1: Current/recent participation in formal learning

Postal survey of EDAP participants

Given that it had been established that the participation rate in the Plant was higher than the national rate for manual workers, the next step was to test the hypothesis that this ***a)*** came about *after* the introduction of EDAP; and ***b)*** resulted from it. This meant first of all comparing employees' participation pre- and post-EDAP, and then, assuming that it had increased, investigating the reasons.

Since the only source of this information was the participants themselves, the method adopted was a survey which would ask current participants about pre-EDAP participation. As well as providing a measure of any change in participation rates, the survey would also identify possible subjects for interview about the reasons underlying a recent decision to participate.

The preferred method for the survey was a self-completion questionnaire, since it would achieve the widest coverage, but there were some doubts about how effective it would be. Because written communications are much less of a 'norm' in the plant than in many other organisations; because the workforce contains many people with low levels of functional literacy; and because English is a second language for approximately 25 per cent of employees, it seemed possible that the response rate to a written questionnaire would be low. The questionnaire was therefore designed to be as short and as uncomplicated as possible. It aimed to elicit the following information:

(i) the subject's current age;
(ii) age on completion of initial education;
(iii) whether the subject had participated in education since leaving school and before EDAP started;
(iv) whether s/he had participated more since the inception of the scheme.

The questionnaire was posted to the homes of all hourly paid employees who had, during a twelve-month period, attended at least one relevant course through EDAP. 555 questionnaires were sent out, and 57 replies were received, giving a response rate of just over 10 per cent.

Although a higher response rate had been hoped for, it is worth noting that managers and trade union representatives on the the EDAP Committee were agreeably surprised that it was as high as it was. McGivney (1990) reports an attempted factory-based survey of manual workers in which, out of 200 questionnaires distributed, only 6 were returned, all by skilled workers. This suggests perhaps that the response rate for this project in the Assembly Plant should not be regarded as disappointing.

The age-profile of respondents was broadly in line with that of the overall population of the Plant, as was racial origin. There was a high proportion of female respondents (13 out of 57, compared with 7 per cent of the workforce of the plant as a whole). Respondents reported a wide range of ages at which initial education was completed, varying from 10 to 23. There was no clear correlation between 'school'-leaving age of individuals and the amount of their EDAP participation, although a surprisingly high number (17 out of 57) had been in full-time education until the age of 17 or later.

Findings

Out of the 57 respondents, 35 indicated that their activities through EDAP represented their first participation in education since leaving school. Although based on a fairly small

EDAP **Questionnaire** Name: _____ Age: _____

1. In what year did you finish your full-time education in school/college? Year: ☐

2. After that year, and before the start of EDAP, did you attend any courses in your spare time? Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If 'Yes,' please give brief details: _____

_____

3. Which course(s) have you attended through EDAP?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

4. What did you think of them?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good
a)	☐	☐	☐
b)	☐	☐	☐
c)	☐	☐	☐
d)	☐	☐	☐
e)	☐	☐	☐

5. Since the start of EDAP, have you been taking more courses than you were <u>before</u> EDAP? Yes: ☐ No: ☐

6. What is your opinion of:

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good
a) the service provided by the EDAP Office in the PTA?	☐	☐	☐
b) the PTA EDAP scheme in general?	☐	☐	☐

If you wish to make any additional comments about EDAP, please write them on the back of this sheet.

Please return your questionnaire to the EDAP Office in the envelope provided. ***Thank you for your help!***

sample, this suggests that as many as two thirds of EDAP users have been new participants in adult education.

The remaining 22 respondents indicated that they had had experience of post-school participation before the start of EDAP. Out of this 22, 15 reported that they had participated more since EDAP started than previously.

Overall, the number who reported that their educational activity had increased since the introduction of EDAP was 50 out of 57.

These findings suggest that the introduction of EDAP was followed by what can only be described as a dramatic upturn in educational activity among hourly-paid employees. The next stage of the study was an attempt to obtain the views of participants themselves on why this was the case. This was carried out through interviews with selected participants from among those who had responded to the questionnaire. The interviews are reported in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

The impact of EDAP: personal experience of participants

Interviews with participants

In-depth interviews were carried out with employees who had responded to the postal survey of EDAP participants. The aim was to find out:

a) whether they perceived their educational participation to be a direct result of the existence of EDAP (rather than other coincidental factors);

b) what features of EDAP they felt had had an influence on their decision to participate.

Interviewees were selected from among questionnaire respondents who had indicated that their educational participation had increased since the introduction of EDAP. Subjects were selected in order to ensure that the interviewees would include both men and women from various racial groups, a range of ages, and people who had participated in a variety of educational activities through EDAP. Priority was given to people whose questionnaire indicated that they had not participated at all in post-initial education prior to the introduction of EDAP.

Potential interviewees were approached personally while at work, to ask if they were prepared to be interviewed. In spite of having to give up a lunch break for the purpose, those approached willingly agreed, without exception. Each was given a brief letter, outlining the aim of the project, and the questions they would be asked in the interview. Interviewees therefore had the opportunity to think about their answers before the interview took place. All interviews were tape-recorded, except two whose subjects preferred not to be recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes.

An important criterion was that interviews should be organised in such a way that the thoughts and ideas expressed by interviewees would be entirely their own. No checklists were used therefore. Each interview was started with a standard introductory question, and the interviewee was invited to talk at length in response. Questions and prompts were used if necessary, either to guide the interview, or to encourage the interviewee to go into more detail, but leading questions were avoided as far as possible.

Nineteen interviews were successfully completed. Profiles of the individual interviewees are contained in the Appendix. Each quotation from the interviews in this chapter is followed by a letter identifying the interviewee.

Letter handed in advance to interviewees

Dear

EDAP Survey

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I will meet you at .....

The interview will be tape recorded, to help me remember what you have said; but your answers will be confidential, and nobody outside the EDAP Office will hear what you have said.

The aim of my research project is to find out whether EDAP is effective in encouraging people to take part. The main questions I would like you to answer are:

a) Is it because of EDAP that you have taken more courses recently than you used to?

b) If the answer is "Yes", can you say what feature(s) of EDAP have encouraged you to take part?

Perhaps you would like to think about this a little before we meet.

Yours sincerely,

ANDY BEATTIE
PTA EDAP Coordinator

Interviews: Introductory questions

In the answers to your questionnaire, you said you have been taking more courses since EDAP started than before.

Does that mean that you take more courses because of EDAP, or is it simply coincidence?

(If "because of EDAP"):
So why, after EDAP began, did you start taking more courses? Had you previously thought about taking courses?

(If "coincidence"):
What are your views about EDAP?

The views of participants

Of the 19 interviewees, 18 said that their increased educational participation was a direct result of the introduction of EDAP. This clearly confirms the hypothesis that the higher than expected educational participation rate among Plant employees can be directly attributed to the existence of the scheme.

Less than a quarter of those interviewed said that, before EDAP, they were unaware, or only vaguely aware, that opportunities existed for adults to take part-time courses. It is perhaps significant that all but one of these participants had received little or none of their initial education in Britain.

Several people were aware of the existence of courses, but did not realise the range and variety available, particularly for adults – there was an assumption that the courses on offer were mainly or wholly for young people:

> "I'd worked at Fords for 15 years... and I thought maybe I was too old to do a Brickwork course, they only took like youngsters on.... I didn't know that you could go to the college and enrol... but since I've been going there... there's quite a lot a college can offer, there's a lot of other things they teach" (F).

> "I mean, you think 'go to college' ... and you think 'Well, there's maths, English, and then running the electricity and brickwork, but that's about it, isn't it? What else can you do?' But it goes on and on, doesn't it? Suddenly you find there's a million things to do and you don't know what to do, you know, there's too much to choose from!" (N)

The majority of interviewees, however, were aware before EDAP that various institutions offered courses for adults. One of the most striking features of the interviews was the large number who said they had often thought about taking a course, but had never put the idea into action:

> "Since I left college in 1973, I've always wanted to do *something*, but didn't know what to do and how to go about it. So I was a large number of years without doing anything at all; perhaps because I didn't have the resources, or the time, or just the *courage* to go to an evening class" (C).

> "I always wanted to do things, just didn't get round to it" (P).

Although the small size and nature of my sample make comparisons and firm conclusions difficult, this finding does not appear to support the view of McGivney and Sargant (see Chapter 2) that very high proportions of non-participants have no interest in education, or have negative or hostile attitudes towards it.

More than half said that the financial assistance the scheme provided was an *essential* factor in their decision to participate; virtually all the others stated that it was a powerful incentive and an important contributory factor. For some, this was perceived mainly as a question of affordability:

> "...the necessities at home are so great, because my wife is not working and I'm the only wage-earner, and the wages ... is hardly enough to pay the mortgage, let alone paying for any studies" (C).

> "...I wouldn't have been able to find the money straight off, because I've got 2 kids. It would have took me time to get that money. I would have got it eventually, but with EDAP it's that much easier" (F).

> "If I had to pay the full £478 for the course, I think I would find it hard to manage" (H).

For others on a tight budget, financial assistance meant they could try out a course without the fear of having wasted the family's money if they didn't like it, or were not

successful:

> "Some courses are very dear, but if you know that ... it hasn't got to come out of your own pocket – to be honest, if you don't succeed in it, you think 'Well, I've not lost money' " (S):
>
> "Me, I wouldn't pay out a hundred like that, not for every course I do. It would have to be something really good, that I knew for definite I would go on liking. I wouldn't pay that much money – I would rather spend it on the house or holiday or something, you know, and hope that the rainy day would never come" (J).
>
> "The money makes a big difference. When EDAP's paying you can try something out, and you think 'Well, if I don't like it then it hasn't cost me anything' " (T).

The interviews clearly confirm that inability to afford fees can be a major barrier for working people. The brief lifetime of EDAP has seen a drastic escalation in the cost of most part-time education for adults. Three factors in particular have contributed to this: (i) the steep increase in fees charged by incorporated colleges; (ii) the much greater cost of NVQ assessments, as compared with the examination schemes they are replacing; and (iii) the continuing disappearance of discretionary grants for part-time adult students. For example, a part-time NVQ craft course may now cost up to £100 per year more than did the equivalent City and Guilds course in 1990. An Open University Foundation Course student in 1990, with the help of an EDAP grant towards course fees, and a discretionary grant towards summer school fees, had to make a personal contribution of only a few pounds towards the overall cost. The equivalent student now (such as Participant H quoted above), even with a £200 EDAP grant, will have to make a contribution of between £200 and £300 from his/her own pocket for the first year of study.

These large increases in cost have taken place during a period when wages, even for established workers in a relatively well-paid industry, have risen very little. While their effects are 'cushioned' for those workers fortunate enough to benefit from EDAP, this is not the case for the vast majority of working people. There appears to be a stark mismatch between the Government's declared aim of attracting working adults back into education, and policies which make part-time courses increasingly financially inaccessible.

It was clear that for some people, the offer of financial help directly stimulated participation, but for a different reason. The EDAP grant was seen as an entitlement — people felt they should take advantage of it because they would otherwise be losing what was rightfully theirs:

> "There's loads of different reasons why I use [EDAP]. One of them is that if Fords are giving away something, then I want to be in there.... It's something for taking .... If it's not utilised, they're not going to come and say 'Look, you didn't use it, here's £50' " (B).
>
> "Anything you get for free you never turn down, never" (J).

In some cases, the financial incentive is seen as the factor which changes 'thinking about participating' into *actually* participating:

> "It's the bit that gives you the push. That could be the push you need" (H).

As with the studies discussed earlier, analysis of these interviews reveals that 'affordability' and 'willingness to pay' are concepts without a clear dividing boundary. Participant C, quoted above as saying that his income is insufficient to afford course fees without EDAP's help, describes later in his interview how, since using EDAP, he has become 'hooked' on education. If EDAP no longer provided financial assistance:

> "I'd definitely have to find the money, because I can't stop now. I'm sure the help will be there, but even if it wasn't... like, you know, last year I paid out a hell of a lot of money for this Maths course: £25 towards the course, and then £50 for these two books.

So if I have to find more, I will."

Similarly Participant H, also quoted above, would continue his Open University course even if he had to find the money himself:

"because I think the negative feeling that I had before EDAP, about 'Oh God, I can't do this' [has gone]. I am now a very positive person because of doing it.... I would find the money from somewhere, and I would continue."

Another interviewee makes explicit the way his perception of 'cost' has shifted. After describing his reluctance, pre-EDAP, to spend money on a course when he did not know whether he would be able to finish it, and the fact that EDAP overcame this barrier, he goes on to say:

"The money is very important... but sometimes people don't mind taking out of their own pocket, because money is not that important. After taking a few lessons, a few courses, I think money is not very important... it becomes less important" (D).

Financial assistance, then, was mentioned by almost all interviewees as an important factor in their decision to participate. However, nobody mentioned money as the only factor.

Several interviewees had attempted to follow part-time courses before EDAP started, but had in one way or another been frustrated:

"I've always been interested in doing something...[but] if you go to most colleges, especially in enrolment time... when you go actually to enrol, there's such a queue. In my area, there was a queue as long as the production line, well, half that length, and the commotion – and sometimes the administration is very poor. X College (that's where I live), well I went there with somebody else to enrol, but what with all the rigmarole, I just didn't bother" (L).

"I started a couple [of courses], but I didn't keep it up. I always found it a bind getting there, you know, especially being on shifts" (P).

These two comments exemplify the two areas in which (leaving aside the financial aspect) the majority of interviewees felt that EDAP had made by far its greatest impact.

The first was the fact that EDAP eased the practical difficulties and disincentives associated with obtaining information, selecting a course, and making an enrolment. Most interviewees valued highly the fact that EDAP brought college representatives *into* the workplace, who could be consulted about the choice of a course; and that, once a decision was made, the EDAP Office dealt with all the formalities concerned with registration, enrolment, and the payment of fees.

"Yes, it *is* because of EDAP. One, because it's free; two, because you've got everything here to sort of set you off. You get all the guidance, and colleges coming here, and you can see what they're doing without you having to go to them, and that's what made me do it" (N).

"In the local paper every September you get 'Do this course, do that course'; me, I just glance at it, and don't really take much notice. But when you have people come in, and you can actually ask them things and talk to them about different things, it just gives you that push to do it" (S).

"EDAP ... saved me from going to the College. I could go through EDAP, fill out the form, give it to Eve, and just wait for the course to start. Whereas if I had to have done it myself, I'd have had to have gone ... and I wouldn't have known how to go about it ... it's easy, through EDAP, I mean. Enrolling in the college, a lot of people had a lot of problems – a lot of people took about 6 or 7 weeks to get enrolled. You know, like you've got the entry, you've got to pay the fee. They were paying that, and they was delaying them with the cards, their number ... but I went straight in there. I had my card done, number, and I was straight into the class the first

night I went there. With EDAP ... they know you're coming. You just tell them you're EDAP, they just punch it through, and you're away" (F).

"If you normally wanted to pursue further education or anything like that, you first have to find out what was on offer, how much you would have to pay, then you would have to enrol, register, mess around, it's all over your borough. Whereas here: there it is, one office!... The very fact that rather than ringing endless amounts of people and going down the library, the town hall or whatever, I just come into the EDAP Office and you would do it all for me" (B).

The second was the fact that EDAP made course attendance practicable by ensuring that provision and support were organised in such a way as to accommodate shift-workers.

"Personally, I don't drive, and if I should go to the local college at night it would be very difficult to get here in time for my shift. And of course I used to live in Catford, and if you go to evening classes, you would never reach here anyway" (G).

"If it wasn't for EDAP I would not have done it, as I wouldn't have been able to do night class because of the shift pattern. I live three quarters of an hour's drive, so it meant I would have to get up at 4.00, be ready to leave by 5.00 to get to the college by 6.00, and then be at work by 9.00.... There's no way you can do it – like 2 hours at college and then on to work, because you know you're going to be late for work" (A).

"[Having classes in the Plant] is very important. If you have to go home, and then go to the Institute, it takes twice as much time. We're already here, so if you are going to have to spend another hour or two, it's not as bad as going from home. I wish there were *more* classes here" (C).

"It does make a lot of difference.... Sometimes when you've worked on the dayshift you don't want to rush to the car park and then to the college. Here you can have a wash, have a cup of coffee and you're ready for the course. Its very, very convenient" (D).

"I didn't [take any courses before EDAP started] because it wouldn't have fitted in with the shift pattern.... I looked at Thurrock Tech, for example, they were from 7 till 9, and you would have to leave Grays at quarter to nine to get here in good time. And it is normally not advisable to leave at the last minute, because that's when the tutor gives you advice on what you should be doing for next week;....and I find that off-putting, that you should have to leave early because you are working night shift" (H).

Several interviewees mentioned the part played in their decision to participate by guidance and support from EDAP. In some instances, it appeared to be information and advice that had been needed:

"I needed guidance in the first place, in a sense, a push, to get the ball rolling, which I got from you. Also I got all the help I needed from you. Whatever questions I had to ask, I got them answered, all the help I needed I always got it. And that's how I went to the first course" (C).

"...EDAP staff. If you're confused about something, they are very good. I mean, I have come in lots of times, confused about courses, and asked to talk to the ladies in there and even yourself.... In fact it was yourself who said go for the Open University Degree, and I doubted myself, I thought I couldn't do it. In fact, I surprised myself by getting really good marks. So that's the support I was referring to" (H).

In others, the support was seen as being psychological – overcoming previous indifference or lack of confidence:

"When EDAP started, EDAP encouraged me" (D).

"The support that we get ... from the EDAP staff... we're encouraged to go on, and there's lots

of support in that sense" (H).

"A lot of people would like to do something, but they think, oh shiftwork, any other excuse you can throw in their way. It's like someone applying for a new job, or applying for a promotion, they're frightened because they don't know what's there. They're not prepared to, sort of, jump in. And I was the same as that ... I only wish I'd had a go at the beginning, because I missed 4 years" (N).

"[Before,] it was all work, work, work, and nothing was presented to you, nobody really bothered with you. That's the point, isn't it? Somebody bothering with you. ... If somebody bothers with you, you think 'Yes, I'll go for it', but if nobody ever says anything, you just plod along in the usual way" (S).

Peers already participating in the scheme were also an important source of information and support:

"And also other people tell you they've done a course and you think 'Yes, that's a good idea. I'll have a go at that.' Word by mouth really, isn't it? ... Obviously you listen to other people.... Most people think they're too stupid to do something. They do, they've got this attitude 'Oh, I don't think I can do that.' But if you say to them 'Yes, it's not that bad', you can do it" (S).

"I came up with another girl. If was left to me, I wouldn't come up myself . I would go in a group, or two people, but not on my own. I'm a sort of a follow on person" (J).

"Plus I suppose the fact that other people are going. If you've got people to go with it helps. Especially when you go to college, sometimes you feel they are all going to be a lot brighter, you're going to be the dim one in the class, but when you go in with people you work with, you know that they're all as stupid as you! You know you're not going to be lagging behind. Especially as you get older, when you're with youngsters their brain is much more alert, and they've just finished school, haven't they, and they're more knowledgeable. But when you go with people from work you're not going to look silly on your own are you?" (P).

CHAPTER 7

The impact of EDAP: summary

The findings of the research into EDAP participation described in the preceding chapters can be summarised as follows.

Quantitative analysis reveals that:

(i) 42 per cent of manual workers in the Assembly Plant at Dagenham have participated in education through EDAP over a three-year period. This participation rate is between two and three times as high as for the comparable section of the population as a whole.

(ii) more than half of these employees are participating in formal learning for the first time since school.

(iii) the introduction of EDAP was followed by a sharp upturn in educational activity among employees, among both those who had previously participated in formal adult learning, and those who had not.

(iv) following the introduction of EDAP, the educational participation rate among manual workers (social classes D/E) in the plant is as high as that for social classes A/B in the population as a whole.

Interviews with EDAP participants reveal that various features of the scheme have had an impact on employees' decisions to participate and, not surprisingly, that the particular features vary from person to person. Nevertheless, clear and significant general findings emerge from these interviews:

(i) interviewees were virtually unanimous in saying that EDAP played a crucial role in their decision to participate.

(ii) a small minority of interviewees were not aware before EDAP of the existence of educational opportunities for adults. The majority were aware of the existence of opportunities, but often not of the range available.

(iii) for both of the groups mentioned in (ii), EDAP's role in providing information was a highly influential factor.

(iv) a high proportion of interviewees had, before EDAP was introduced, considered enrolling for a course, but had never previously put the idea into action.

(v) for almost all the interviewees, the availability of EDAP financial support was a powerful factor in their decision to participate; more than half felt it was a deciding factor.

(vi) the second most commonly mentioned factor was that EDAP helped overcome practical difficulties and disincentives associated with obtaining information, selecting a course, and making an enrolment.

(vii) the third most commonly mentioned factor was that provision and support were organised in such a way as to accommodate shift-workers.

Placing these findings in the context of the discussion in Chapter 2, it seems clear that, for most people, EDAP has acted as a catalyst which helped or persuaded them to implement a course of action they had previously considered, but not taken. It was not so much that EDAP gave them new reasons for participation, or a new appreciation of the value or benefits of education; rather, (and several people used the same word), it gave them the *"push"* they needed to go ahead. In other words, the impact of the scheme lay less in affecting motivation and attitudes than in facilitating a decision to act – by providing the circumstances necessary for, in Courtney's words quoted earlier, "learning orientation to be translated into action" (Courtney, 1992 p56).

CHAPTER 8

Implications

In my Introduction, I referred to current targets for education and training, either set or endorsed by the Government, which could be achieved only through an increase in the number of mature part-time learners; and posed the question whether there was any evidence that a significant upturn in participation could be achieved, particularly among the majority of the population in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs.

The findings of my study suggest that such an upturn could, indeed, be achieved. During the comparatively short life of EDAP, there has been a sharp increase in educational participation among Ford Dagenham assembly workers, an increase which is shown to be directly attributable to the scheme. This suggests that the working population contains a sizeable body of people who are not currently participants in education, but who, given appropriate support and encouragement, could readily be attracted back into learning. The implications of EDAP's success seem clear.

For policy-makers

As indicated in my introduction, economic and technological change have led in recent years to profound changes in patterns of employment. It is widely acknowledged that in order to cope with the social effects of these changes, and to meet the demand for a highly-skilled, highly-educated workforce which can respond rapidly to change, our society needs to develop a new 'culture' in which learning plays a continuing role throughout people's lives.

EDAP appears to have achieved an unprecedented level of success in stimulating a return to learning among working people. The widespread adoption of similar schemes could, in the short term, play a major part in achieving national training targets, and, in the longer term, be a cornerstone in the establishment of a new 'learning culture'.

Government has a vital role to play in promoting employee development. There are, I would suggest, two major issues which would need to be addressed in the first instance:

a) EDAP provides an excellent model which could easily be adopted in many major workplaces. However, the scheme described in this study has had certain circumstances favouring its success – primarily that it was developed in a large workplace offering economies of scale, and in a major metropolis offering access to many sources of education and training. Many people, of course, work for small employers with fewer resources, and with more restricted access to educational institutions, and ways need to be found of applying the concept of employee development in the widest possible variety of work contexts. A start has already been made, with interesting projects recently started in one or two parts of the country exploring the provision of employee development in smaller

workplaces. However, much more work needs to be done in this area, and may depend in the early stages on active Government support.

b) Most employers still take a short-term view of investment in education and training. Very often, money is invested in training only when there is a clearly perceived pay-off in terms of efficiency or productivity. This tendency is likely to become even more pronounced with the trend towards more short-term employment: employers want to recruit workers who already have the skills they are looking for, and not invest in education for employees whom they may not retain for very long.

Given that a better educated and trained workforce is viewed as a national economic necessity, employee development schemes would seem to represent a highly cost-effective form of investment, and there is a clear case for an active policy of Government encouragement for employers setting up schemes. However, encouragement may not be enough. The benefits of employee development are mainly long-term, and not easily or precisely quantifiable, and there is therefore likely to be reluctance among most individual employers to bear the costs. Government support will need to include either some form of central funding, or the provision of financial incentives to stimulate initiatives on the part of all kinds of employers.

For employers

For employers seeking the potential benefits of an employee development programme, Ford EDAP offers a highly successful model for the design of a scheme. The features of the model which appear to have been essential to its success are:

- partnership between the company and the trade unions in the design and management of the scheme;

- a (modest) financial incentive for employee participation;

- the provision within the workplace of independent educational advice and guidance for employees;

- the presence within the workplace of staff with educational expertise, who can identify barriers to participation, and work in close partnership with educational providers in overcoming them;

- a 'liberal' approach towards the support of a wide variety of learning activities, not necessarily job- or even work-related, and without restrictive conditions in terms of completion or achievement.

For employees and trade unions

The findings of this study are supported by the experience of other workplaces, Ford and non-Ford, where employee development schemes have been introduced. They demonstrate a simple fact: such schemes are highly popular with workers.

The scale of this popularity came as a surprise to many observers in both industry and education, who expected that only a small minority of employees would be interested.

Certainly, in the early days of EDAP, employees tended to approach the scheme with some suspicion, but the feeling they voiced most often was that the 'offer' seemed too good to be true. There must, they felt, be a catch! These initial suspicions were soon overcome, and subsequently the majority of the workforce have participated in the scheme, with many individuals who previously took no part in any formal learning activity becoming regular participants.

Much of this success is due to the crucial part played by the trade unions. The unions at Ford did not simply approve of the EDAP scheme. They played a central role in the initiatives which led to its creation; in the planning and design of the programme; and in negotiating its implementation with the Company. Subsequently, they have remained fully active in the management of the scheme, encouraging their members to see EDAP not as a 'perk', but as a valuable benefit and entitlement available to all as part of their remuneration.

This being the case, EDAP's popularity is less surprising. Since the programme is in large measure perceived as 'belonging' to the employees, employees' representatives have an active interest in ensuring that the programme takes a form which matches thair members needs and wants.

Clearly, the opportunity exists for trade unions to take a leading role in promoting wide-scale adoption of employee development programmes. At national level, they can disseminate information and advice based on successful experience so far, and lobby Government and employers to help ensure that local initiatives will meet a positive response. At local level, they can take the initiative in formulating proposals to put to employers in individual workplaces.

The most fundamental requirement for the success of an employee development programme is that it should be popular among employees. Nobody is in a better position than trade unions to ensure that programmes are designed in such a way as to achieve this aim.

For educational providers

The under-representation of working-class adults in education has, I would suggest, been self-perpetuating. The very absence of working people from college populations has meant that their voice is largely unheard by educationalists, and has left the colleges largely unaware of just *why* they are missing.

EDAP clearly demonstrates the potential results of establishing an educational 'presence' in the workplace. The findings of this study indicate that many working people, long- perceived by providers as being 'beyond their reach', are in fact potential students whose educational participation is blocked by situational and institutional barriers. Identifying these barriers may require close contact with workers, and an understanding of the circumstances which surround their working lives. For educational providers working to increase and widen adult participation, therefore, the workplace should be an essential focus for their efforts.

Closer links between employment and education have, of course, been constantly advocated by policy-makers in recent years, and built into the structures of the education system. The thrust behind this development has been the view that education should serve instrumental and vocational ends, and, not surprisingly, the efforts of providers have been concentrated more and more narrowly on job-related needs. What EDAP demonstrates to providers is that close links with workplaces can also be a route for promoting participation in the broadest educational sense.

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Appendix

Profiles of Interviewees

(courses in brackets are those the individual has followed through EDAP)

	Sex	Ethnic origin	Age	Sch. leav. age	Pre-EDAP particip'n?
A:	**Male**	**UK/Irish**	**44**	**15**	**No**
	(C&G Information Technology; Elem. French; Desk Top Publishing)				
B:	**Male**	**UK/Irish**	**34**	**18**	**No**
	(Art of Photography; Stop Smoking; Intro. Psychology; Soft Stone Carving; Looking into Painting; OU Foundation Social Science)				
C:	**Male**	**Asian**	**41**	**20**	**No**
	(Computer Literacy; Car Maintenance; English Skills; C&G Computer Applications; Maths A-level)				
D:	**Male**	**Asian**	**45**	**17**	**No**
	(Motor Vehicle Service and Repair; Swimming; French)				
E:	**Male**	**Asian**	**45**	**19**	**Yes**
	(Plumbing; Elect. Installation in the Home; Carpentry; Car Maintenance; Desk Top Publishing)				
F:	**Male**	**UK/Irish**	**32**	**15**	**No**
	(First Aid; Basic Brickwork; Brickwork NVQ)				
G:	**Female**	**Afro-Caribb.**	**46**	**16**	**Yes**
	(Computers for Beginners; C&G Computer Applications; Basic Maths; Piano)				
H:	**Male**	**Asian**	**26**	**17**	**No**
	(English and Maths (Corresp.); Car Maintenance; Computer for Beginners; OU Foundation; Social Science)				
J:	**Female**	**UK/Irish**	**36**	**15**	**No**
	(Computers for Beginners; C&G Computer Applications)				
K:	**Male**	**Other**	**33**	**17**	**Yes**
	(Motor Vehicle Craft; Auto Electrics; Book-keeping)				
L:	**Male**	**Afro-Caribb.**	**35**	**?**	**No**
	(Plumbing; Brickwork; Carpentry; Electrical Installation C&G)				

M: **Male** **Afro-Caribb.** **32** **16** **Yes**
(Elect. Engineering; German; Spreadsheets; Start Your Own Business; French; Gas Safety; Central Heating Installation)

N: **Male** **UK/Irish** **40** **15** **No**
(Spanish; Radio Amateurs; Brickwork and Plastering NVQ)

P: **Female** **UK/Irish** **51** **15** **Yes**
(Computers for Beginners; C&G Computer Applications)

Q: **Male** **Asian** **43** **?** **No**
(Swimming; English and Maths; Computer for Beginners)

R: **Female** **UK/Irish** **41** **15** **Yes**
(Computers for Beginners; C&G Computer Applications)

S: **Female** **UK/Irish** **41** **15** **Yes**
(French; Computers for Beginners; C&G Computer Applications; Typing)

T: **Female** **Asian** **40** **10** **No**
(Design Cutting and Making; Computers in Business; Machine Knitting; Beauty Care ITEC; Hairdressing)

U: **Female** **Asian** **45** **17** **No**
(Machine Knitting)

50

In recent years, the concept of 'lifelong learning' has taken on a vast new significance. Rapid changes in technology, and in patterns of employment, mean that initial education may have a much shorter 'shelf life' than in the past. The opportunity for people to acquire new knowledge and skills throughout their adult life is becoming an economic necessity, both for individuals and for the nation as a whole.

But how is the transition to a new 'learning culture' to be achieved? The majority of working people still think of 'education' as something which they do *before* they start work. Most have had little or no experience of formal education or training since leaving school, and the education system has until now been largely ineffective in attracting them back into learning.

The start of the 1990s saw the establishment of Ford EDAP (Employee Development and Assistance Programme), a new concept in adult learning, and the first of its kind in Britain. In a joint venture, Ford Motor Company and the trade unions who represent their employees launched a scheme which aimed to encourage a widespread return to learning among Ford workers.

Andy Beattie has studied the impact of EDAP in a major manufacturing plant, and in *Working People and Lifelong Learning* he demonstrates that the scheme has achieved an unprecedented increase in educational participation among workers. He analyses the reasons for its success, and highlights the importance of EDAP as a model for policy-makers, employers and education providers.

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THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties or disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

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